

# Transportation

Transportation is an issue that has major impacts, both positive and negative, on the vitality and livability of a community. The viability of local businesses and the overall character of the neighborhood are both affected by transportation facilities, often in conflicting ways,

On a larger scale, West Seattle is a peninsula with only a few direct connections to the rest of the city and the regional highway system. With growth and development within West Seattle and with increasing traffic congestion on the roads connecting West Seattle to the outside, access to/from West Seattle is becoming increasingly difficult. Congestion and delay on West Seattle's external connections degrades accessibility and mobility for residents and businesses alike. The issue of West Seattle access is being addressed in a separate study in which MoCA is collaborating with other West Seattle neighborhoods. Initial recommendations from that study have been incorporated into our Plan, and are summarized in the section "West Seattle-wide Issues" on page 80.

Locally, outreach has shown us that pedestrian/bicycle access and safety and automobile mobility are the highest priority transportation issues. At the same time, maintaining smooth traffic flow on our arterial streets is also most important. The Transportation Committee, therefore, identified five areas on which to focus our planning efforts. These include the Fauntleroy Way SW Corridor, the California Avenue SW Corridor, the 35<sup>th</sup> Avenue SW corridor, east-west arterials, and traffic management/calming spot improvements at key locations.

## **Fauntleroy Way Corridor**

The Fauntleroy Way corridor is one of the main north-south arterial routes serving West Seattle. The corridor provides arterial access between the Morgan Junction neighborhood and the regional highway system (via the West Seattle Bridge), and it serves as the primary access route to/from the Washington State Ferry System's Fauntleroy terminal and its Vashon Island and Southworth (Kitsap County) ferry service. Fauntleroy Way also provides access to the Morgan Junction commercial area, located at and around the Fauntleroy Way/California Avenue SW intersection,

In making its way from the ferry terminal in the southwest to the West Seattle Bridge in the northeast, Fauntleroy Way cuts across the grid of local and arterial streets in West Seattle; the roadway runs diagonally through part of the neighborhood, and in other parts it follows the alignment of north-south streets. The diagonal segments of the alignment create awkward and confusing local and arterial street intersections at 39th Avenue SW, SW Juneau Street, 40th Avenue SW, SW Morgan Street, 45th Avenue SW, and Holly Place SW.

North of the Morgan Junction commercial area, Fauntleroy Way has four travel lanes with on-street parking on both sides of the street. South of the Morgan Junction commercial area, Fauntleroy Way has a three-lane cross-section - with one travel lane in each direction and a wide center two-way left turn lane - with on-street parking on both sides of the street. The portion of Fauntleroy Way in the Morgan Junction neighborhood is designed to support free-flowing traffic operations: there is only the one traffic signal at California Avenue SW to control traffic flow on Fauntleroy Way between the ferry terminal and SW Edmunds St.

Traffic volumes on Fauntleroy Way can be heavy, with traffic leaving the ferry<sup>1</sup> tending to travel in unbroken “platoons” through the neighborhood (the lack of traffic signals allows the platoons to remain intact over a greater distance from the terminal than they might otherwise). Speeds on Fauntleroy Way are excessive; the roadway configuration and traffic control (i.e., the roadway width and the lack of signals) are significant contributors to the speed problems that exist. There also is a perception that much of the traffic enroute to and from the ferry is trying to get through the area as quickly as it can, and that there is little respect for the neighborhood through which Fauntleroy passes. All of these factors -roadway width, skewed streets, traffic volume, platooning, and speed - combine to make pedestrian and vehicle movement across Fauntleroy Way difficult and dangerous. To facilitate safe crossings at selected Locations there are pedestrian signals at Findlay Street on the north side of the neighborhood, and at Myrtle Street and Webster Street near Lincoln Park. Our neighborhood strongly supports maintaining current roadway capacity levels.

In addition to its important traffic-carrying role, Fauntleroy Way must provide safe, convenient crossings for pedestrians walking to/from bus stops, parks, commercial areas and other neighborhood destinations. Lane configuration and traffic control/calming must be designed to serve these conflicting needs,

**Goal 1:** improve local access **and circulation on arterial** roadways in the Morgan Junction neighborhood

Policy 1.1 Periodically assess pavement conditions and implement repairs as warranted.

Policy 1.2 Optimize lane configuration and signal timing at signalized intersections to improve, vehicle and pedestrian circulation.

Policy 1.3 Develop and implement strategies to reduce speeding traffic and to maintain appropriate speeds on arterial roadways,

Recommendation: Evaluate the Fauntleroy Way SW corridor for opportunities to improve vehicle, bicycle and pedestrian safety, accessibility, traffic flow and provide aesthetic landscaping improvements that maintain or improve existing traffic flow,

- Analyze traffic volumes (existing and future), delay times, and travel times when considering potential new traffic and/or pedestrian signals, and retaining on-street parking and bus zones; consider bicycle lanes
- Improve bus stops and pedestrian crossings by installing painted crosswalks, curb bulbs, pedestrian median refuges, and pedestrian signals in appropriate locations
- Redesign Fauntleroy Way SW / California Avenue SW intersection for improved neighborhood traffic circulation.

Recommendation: Reconfigure and channelize “non-standard Fauntleroy Way SW intersections; landscape unused street right-of-way and islands at the following locations:

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<sup>1</sup> It is important to note that the ferry system has a finite, limited capacity to put traffic on Fauntleroy Way. During the busiest 60-minute period, a maximum of four boats dock at Fauntleroy. These boats have a combined total vehicle carrying capacity of 405 cars, and as a result ferry traffic cannot amount to more than 300-400 vehicles per hour on northbound Fauntleroy Way (if the boats are all full and all off-loading traffic continues north on Fauntleroy). Comparing these volumes to the typical capacity of an arterial lane (1400-1500 vehicles per hour), it can be concluded that with the exception of the signalized intersection at California Avenue SW, a single travel lane in each direction will provide adequate capacity for traffic on Fauntleroy Way.

- . 40th Avenue S,W/SWJuneau Streef/39th Ave SW(Figure1)
- 45th Avenue/Holly Place SW (Figure 2)
- . Lincoln Park Drive

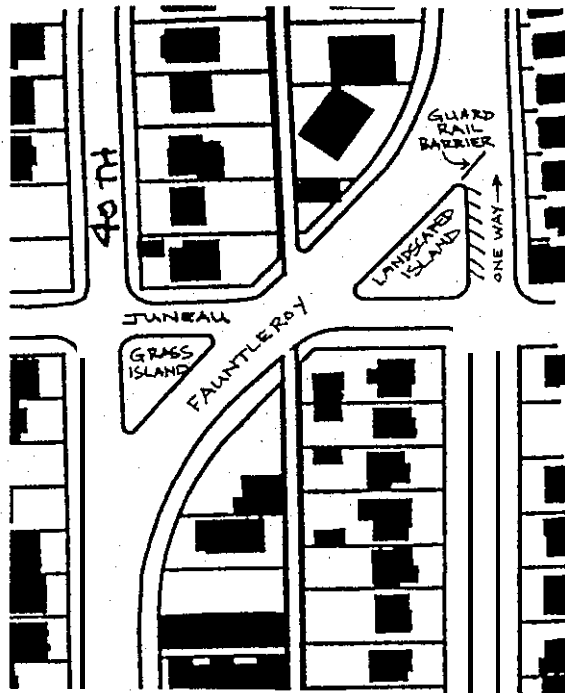
Recommendation: In order to mitigate current traffic circulation and pedestrian safety problems at the intersection of 42nd, Fauntleroy, and Morgan, assess the feasibility of reconfiguring the intersection, Prepare a traffic study to determine the positive and negative transportation and safety impacts of the development of a pedestrian “plaza” in the triangle bordered by 42nd Avenue SW, SW Morgan Street, and Fauntleroy Way SW, The study should examine the following impacts:

- The impacts resulting from the possible re-alignment of SW Morgan Street between Fauntleroy Way SW and 42nd Avenue SW, especially the effect on adjacent residential streets, operations of the Fauntleroy Way SW/ California Avenue SW intersection, and pedestrian safety.
- Consider installing a potential traffic signal at the Fauntleroy Way SW/42nd Avenue SW intersection
- Revising 42nd Avenue SW street alignment to provide a better connection between Fauntleroy Way and SW Morgan Street (to/from the east),
- Improving bus stops and pedestrian crossings at and around the plaza.
- Pending results of a traffic study (see above) develop a community plaza at the intersection of Fauntleroy Way SW and SW Morgan Street, In addition to landscaping, other features the plaza might include are an improved bus stop, shelter with café-style tables and benches, a community bulletin board, public art and, potentially, a fountain.

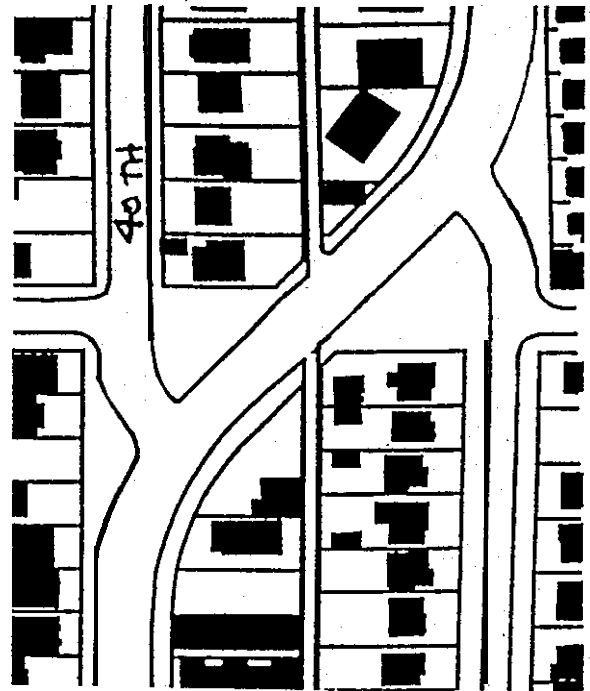


# Fauntleroy/Juneau Triangles

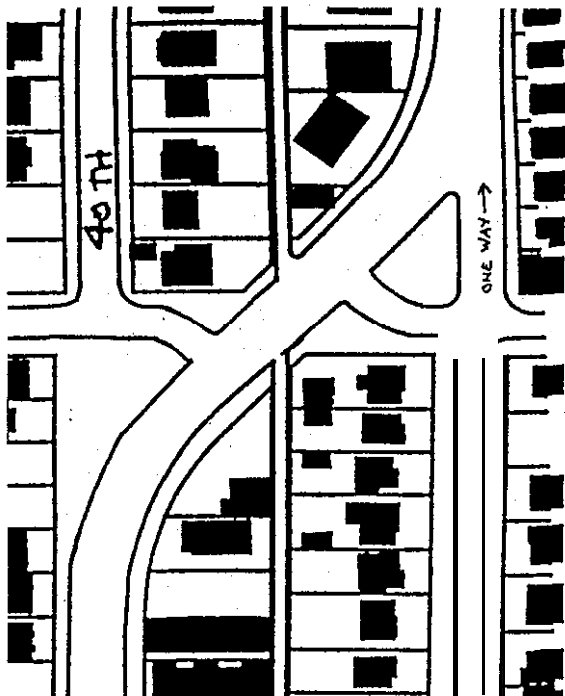
## Existing Conditions



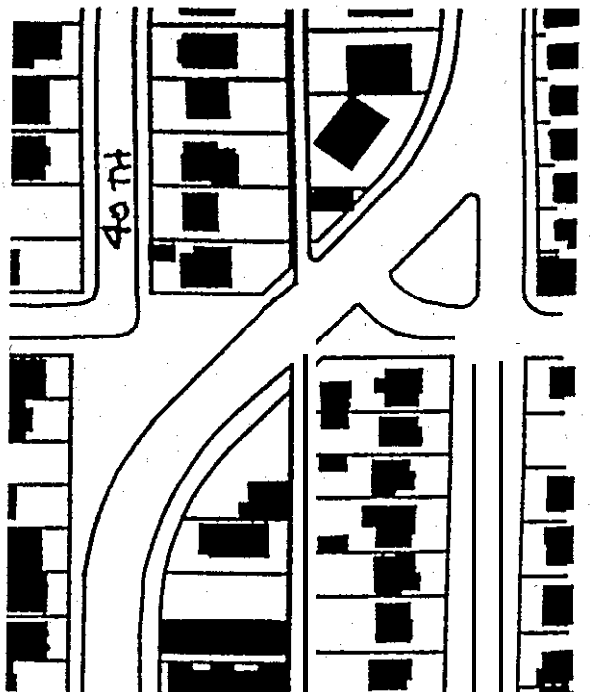
## Option 1



## Option 2



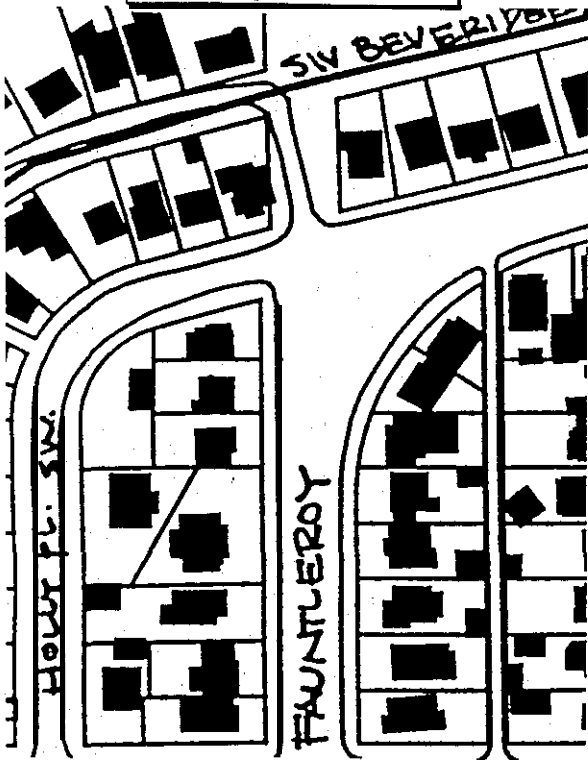
## Option 3



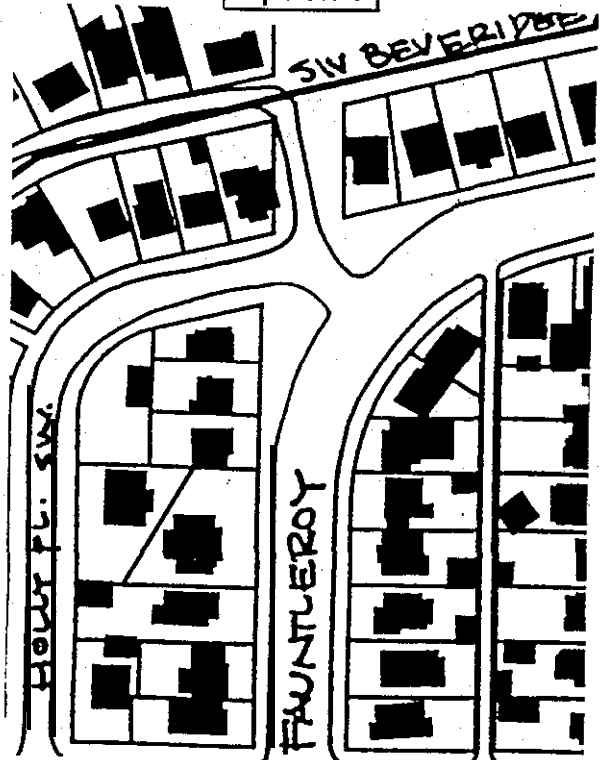
*These diagrams are conceptual in nature. The final plans will be determined only after completion of traffic and engineering studies and consultation with the community.*

Fauntleroy/Holly Place/45<sup>th</sup> Avenue Intersection

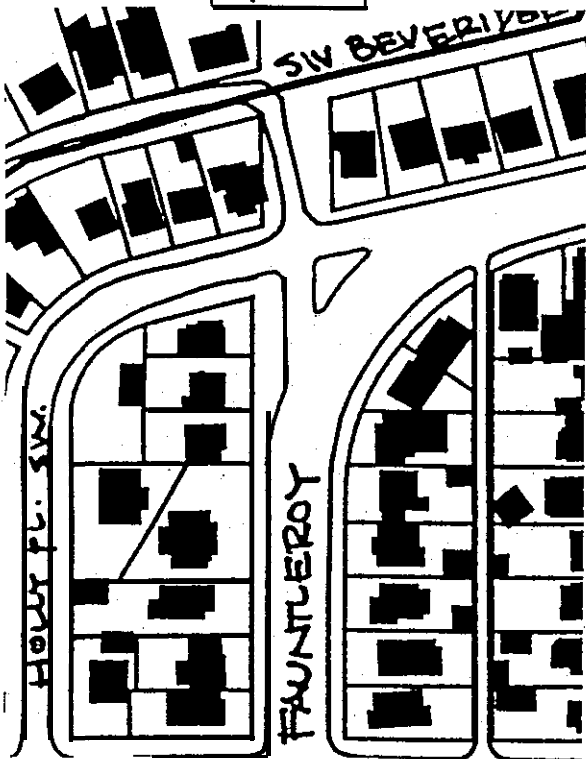
Existing Conditions



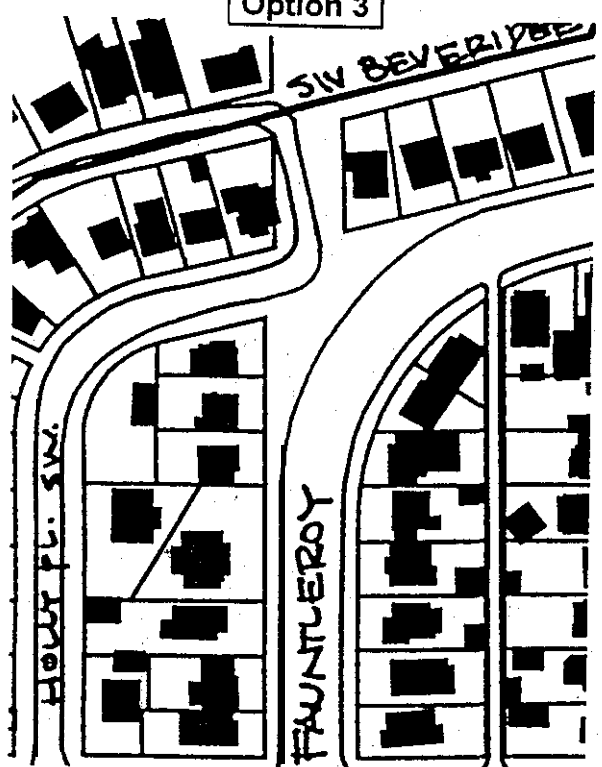
Option 1



Option 2



Option 3



*These diagrams are conceptual in nature. The final plans will be determined only after completion of traffic and engineering studies and consultation with the community.*

## California Avenue SW Corridor Pedestrian Improvements

The California Avenue SW corridor is one of the main north-south arterial routes serving West Seattle. Its main roles are to provide a connection to Fauntleroy Way to/from the north (including the West Seattle Bridge), to provide access to the Morgan Junction and West Seattle Junction commercial areas, and connect Morgan Junction with the residential area atop Gatewood Hill,

The California Avenue SW roadway is fairly wide, its cross-section accommodating two wide traffic lanes with on-street parking on both sides south of the Morgan Junction commercial area (south of SW Holly Street), and three lanes - a travel lane in each direction plus a center two-way left turn lane - plus parking on both sides through the commercial area and north of it. There are traffic signals at the Fauntleroy Way SW and SW Graham Street intersections, there is a pedestrian signal at SW Frontenac Street south of the commercial area, and there marked crosswalks with illuminated signs at SW Findlay Street north of the commercial area and SW Othello Street south of the commercial area.

Heavy traffic volumes and high speeds combine with the roadway width to make it difficult for pedestrians to cross the street, even at the signalized intersections. In addition to its important traffic-carrying role, California Avenue SW must provide safe, convenient crossings for pedestrians walking to/from bus stops, parks, schools, and other neighborhood destinations. Pedestrian convenience and safety in the commercial area surrounding the Fauntleroy Way SW intersection also is important to the health and viability of local businesses. Lane configuration and traffic control/calming must be designed to serve these conflicting needs.

**Goal 2** Improve pedestrian and bicycle mobility in the Morgan Junction neighborhood to provide safe and convenient opportunities for pedestrian and bicyclists to cross arterial streets, **access** bus stops, and utilize neighborhood businesses and parks.

**Policy 2.1** Implement arterial roadway improvements with pedestrian and bicycle facilities.

**Policy 2.2** Coordinate roadway improvement efforts with Business District, Parks/Open Space and Public Safety Goals and Policies.

**Recommendation:** Improve pedestrian crossings by installing the following devices, as appropriate, at intersections in the Morgan Junction business district and north and south along California Avenue SW:

- . paint crosswalks
- . curb bulbs
- . pedestrian median refuges
- pedestrian signals

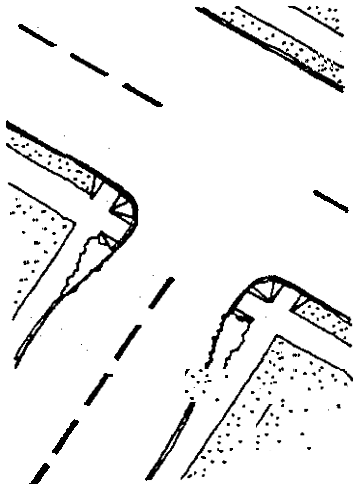
**Specific** locations on California Avenue SW at which pedestrian improvements should be installed include the following:

- . SW Holden Street intersection
- the existing crosswalk at SW Othello Street
- . the existing pedestrian signal and crosswalk at SW, Frontenac Street
- all bus stops south of Fauntleroy Way



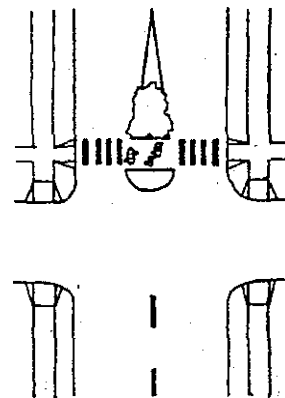
*Pedestrian safety improvements are recommended in various locations.*

- in the Morgan Junction commercial area (south of Fauntleroy Way SW) at or near SW Holly Street
- Fauntleroy Way SW/SW Morgan Street intersection'
- north of Fauntleroy Way SW: all bus stops and/or every second block (i.e., at some regular interval that provides adequate pedestrian access across California Avenue SW for the surrounding neighborhoods and adjacent businesses and residences)



*Curb bulbs are one method to improve pedestrian safety.*

*Pedestrian refuges improve safety on busy arterial streets.*



## 35th Avenue SW Corridor Pedestrian Improvements

The 35th Avenue SW corridor is one of the main north-south arterial routes serving West Seattle. Its main role is to carry traffic to and from the West Seattle Bridge and to provide access to Westwood and other shopping destinations south of the Morgan Junction neighborhood. The 35th Avenue SW roadway is fairly wide, accommodating four traffic lanes with on-street parking on both sides. On the portion of 35th Avenue SW in the Morgan Junction neighborhood, there are traffic signals at SW Findlay Street, SW Morgan Street, SW Myrtle Street, SW Webster Street, and SW Holden Street, and there is a pedestrian signal at SW Raymond Street,

Heavy traffic volumes and high speeds combine with the roadway width to make it difficult for pedestrians to cross the street, even at the signalized intersections. In addition to its important traffic-carrying role, 35th Avenue SW must provide safe, convenient crossings for pedestrian movement to/from bus stops, parks, and other neighborhood destinations. Lane configuration and traffic control/calming must be designed to serve these conflicting needs.

Recommendation: Improve pedestrian crossings at signalized cross-streets and at bus stops along 35<sup>th</sup> Avenue SW by the installation of the following, as appropriate

- . paint crosswalks
- curb bulbs
- . pedestrian median refuges
- pedestrian signals

## East-West Arterial Corridor Pedestrian Improvements

There are several east-west arterial corridors in the Morgan Junction neighborhood that provide connections between the major north-south arterials as well as access to the residential areas they pass through. These east-west arterials – SW Graham Street, SW Morgan Street, and SW Holden Street – carry much less traffic than Fauntleroy Way SW, California Avenue SW, and 35th Avenue SW, the major north-south arterials. However, each of the east-west arterials has a wide roadway, and traffic on each can tend to travel fairly fast (especially on downhill segments). Traffic speeds, roadway width, and limited sight distance at the crests of hills make these arterials difficult for pedestrians to cross.

Recommendation: Improve pedestrian crossings along SW, Graham Street (from California Avenue SW to Fauntleroy Way SW), SW Morgan Street (from 42nd Avenue SW to 35th Avenue SW), and SW Holden Street (from California Avenue SW to 35th Avenue SW) by, installing the following devices, as appropriate, at bus stops, on school walk routes, and at a spacing of no greater than two blocks elsewhere:

- paint crosswalks
- . curb bulbs
- . pedestrian median refuges
- . pedestrian signals



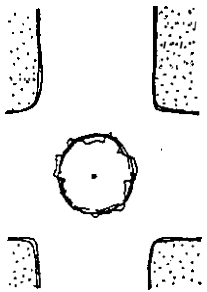
## Traffic Management/Calming and Spot Improvements

There are a number of local streets and intersections throughout the Morgan Junction neighborhood that experience excessive speeds and/or inappropriate through traffic flows that "create safety hazards for motorists, pedestrians, and bicyclists, cause noise and inconvenience for local residents, and generally degrade the residential environment. These problems can be addressed by means of a variety of traffic calming, traffic control, and street network improvements.

Goal 3: Improve the safety and maintain the character of residential streets.

Policy 3.1 Develop and implement improvements to encourage through traffic to utilize arterial roadways,

Policy 3.2 Develop and implement strategies to reduce speeding traffic,



*Traffic circles are commonly used traffic calming devices.*

Recommendation: Install traffic calming and traffic control devices to decrease speeds and discourage through traffic at the following locations as approved by the surrounding residents:

- SW Holly Street from 41st Avenue SW to California Avenue SW
- 48th Avenue SW from SW Raymond Street to SW Juneau Street
- SW Frontenac Street and SW Myrtle Street from Fauntleroy Way SW to California Avenue SW (at Gatewood School)
- 38th Avenue SW from SW Findlay Street to SW Juneau Street
- SW Juneau St. from 35th Avenue SW to California Avenue SW
- 38th Avenue SW and SW Willow Street
- 42nd Avenue SW between SW Morgan and SW Holly

## Public Transportation Facilities and Services

Transit is a critical element of the transportation system that provides internal and external access and mobility for West Seattle residents, visitors, and businesses. West Seattle relies heavily on transit for access to downtown Seattle and other parts of the City and the region. With access to/from West Seattle provided almost exclusively by the heavily-congested West Seattle Bridge, it is critical to the future health and vitality of West Seattle neighborhoods and commercial districts that all forms of public transportation be expanded and improved. The finite automobile capacity into and out of West Seattle is over-taxed, even at current levels of traffic and development. Accordingly, public transportation will need to play an expanded role to serve West Seattle commuters and other travelers if future growth in travel demand generated by comprehensive-plan-specified growth is to be adequately accommodated.

Note: Some of the recommendations that follow are West Seattle-wide in nature and are also included "in the "West Seattle-wide Issues" section on page 72. These are marked by a "WSW" symbol below.

Goal 4: Ensure that new transit improvements, including Metro bus, Sound Transit bus, and monorail, benefit the Morgan Junction neighborhood in terms of transportation services and impacts on local **activities** and environmental conditions.

Policy 4.1 Ensure that the new Sound Transit regional express bus route through West Seattle serves the urban villages along California Avenue SW.

Recommendation: Improve and expand public transportation facilities and services providing access to/from West Seattle (WSW):

- Improve speed and efficiency of existing and future bus service by enabling buses to avoid traffic congestion
- Expand service coverage in West Seattle to make transit services more easily accessible to more people and activities
- Expand transit network connections to provide more and better linkages between West Seattle and other parts of the City and region
- Develop new, alternative modes of public transportation to provide additional non-auto access to West Seattle (e.g., waterborne transit, monorail)

Recommendation: Metro should continue to expand service hours and frequency of its West Seattle service. Also, Metro should continue to increase the number of West Seattle, Seattle, and King County origins/destinations served by West Seattle routes. Work with Metro to locate routes and site bus stops for maximum ridership and minimal impact to adjacent property owners. (WSW).

Goal 5: Support efforts to address traffic and transportation issues which have an impact on West Seattle.

Policy 5.1 Support and participate in coordinated West Seattle transportation planning regarding the West Seattle Bridge, ferry traffic, and other transportation issues,

Recommendation: Work with Fauntleroy Community Association to encourage the rerouting of state ferries to the downtown Seattle ferry terminal.

Recommendation: Develop and implement a comprehensive "action program" of transportation system improvements and actions that will fully address the existing and future access needs of the entire West Seattle community (WSW). The action program must

- define and quantify existing and future access needs
- be comprehensive: it must jointly address all modes of transportation, and it must address all levels of detail, from the "universal" (e.g., transportation system capacity) to the "microscopic" (e.g., traffic operations on bridge on-ramps)
- identify immediate, near-term, and long-range improvements and actions, and develop implementation programs for them

Recommendation: West Seattle Bridge-Spokane Street Viaduct Bus Operations: The City of Seattle, the Port of Seattle, WSDOT, and Metro should cooperate to provide roadway, intersection, and traffic control improvements that give Regional Express and Metro buses priority to, from, onto, off of, and across the West Seattle Bridge and the Spokane Street Viaduct (WSW). Such improvements should include:

- add HOV lanes on the bridge and the viaduct
- intersection and ramp queue jump/bypass lanes on bridge and viaduct access routes
- traffic signal priority and preemption

"Regional Express," the express bus division of Sound Transit (RTA) plans to begin operating a number of express bus routes throughout the region in the fall of 1999. One of the Regional Express routes will operate, between Sea-Tac Airport and downtown Seattle via Burien, White Center, Fauntleroy, and West Seattle,

Recommendation (WSW):

- Recognizing the need to make limited stops on this express service, the Regional Express West Seattle route should maximize the connections and access it provides in West Seattle, including transfers with Metro routes, access to the Fauntleroy Ferry Terminal, and ensuring that the Regional Express bus route serves the urban villages along California Avenue SW.
- The Regional Express West Seattle route should be extended or through-routed via I-90 to the Eastside after stopping in downtown Seattle,

**Water Taxi/Seabus**

The existing Elliott Bay Water Taxi, begun in 1997, is a summer-season passenger-only ferry service connecting West Seattle and downtown Seattle.

**Recommendation:** The Water Taxi service should be expanded into a permanent year-round system (like Vancouver, BC's Seabus) that is designed to be an integral and important element of the transportation system serving West Seattle. In order to determine the capital and operational requirements of such a system and to guide its incremental development, a long range comprehensive master plan for facilities and services - on both sides of Elliott Bay - should be prepared (WSW).

**Recommendation:** Connections to the West Seattle Seabus terminal should be expanded and improved. Bus service, shuttle/circulator service, a potential tram/funicular system, parking (or lack thereof), and bicycle/pedestrian pathways should be addressed (WSW).